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Paris Peace Conference

The claim of the Korean
people... Petition.

Paris

1919

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11
KOREAN DELEGATION

THE PEACE CONFERENCE

THE CLAIM
OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE AND NATION

FOR LIBERATION FROM JAPAN AND FOR THE
RECONSTITUTION OF KOREA
AS AN INDEPENDENT STATE

Petition

PARIS : APRIL 1919.

Copy of letter sent to President Wilson

LA MISSION CORÉENNE

38, Rue de Châteaudun, PARIS (9^e)

May 12th, 1919

The Honourable Woodrow Wilson,
President of The United States of America,
11, Place des Etats-Unis, Paris.

Dear Mr. President.

I have the honour to submit for your perusal a copy of the claim of the Korean People and Nation for liberation from Japan, which my Delegation has filed with the Peace Conference.

The claim has been cast in the form of a Petition, with a Memorandum setting forth a series of facts and views in support of our claim for the reconstitution of Korea as an independent state. Sections 1-15 of the Petition are a summary -- with the exception of the important foot-notes on pages 2 and 5 -- of the principal points developed in the Memorandum. The rest of the Petition deals with matter untouched in the Memorandum.

May I invite your special attention to Section XIV of the Memorandum in which the question is put :

"Is not the gravest indictment of Japan's work in Korea to be read in the fact that Christianity is seriously regarded as a force hostile to the success of the Japanese system of government in the country?"

I venture to suggest, however, that Sections XVIII - XXI of the Memorandum will be found to summarise and re-state current views in the Far East which ought to be deeply interesting to you, Mr. President, both as an American statesman and as one who thinks of and for the future.

Just the urgencies of the moment should prevent you from glancing at those sections of the Memorandum, I am hoping to tempt your intellectual curiosity on the subject by a quotation from Section XIX which briefly indicts, in the sense of a definition, a policy of empire unmatched in its sweep of conception since the crumbling of Rome :

"Japan's Continental policy aims, first, at the seizure of the hegemony of Asia through the DOMINATION AND CONTROL OF THE MAN-POWER AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF CHINA; -- possible only by the Japanese possession of the continental point d'appui of Korea -- and, next, at the MASTERY OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN AS THE SOLE MEANS OF FORCING AN ENTRANCE FOR JAPANESE EMIGRANTS INTO THE RICH LANDS OF THE AUSTRALIAN AND THE PACIFIC SEABOARD OF THE UNITED STATES in other words, the CONVERSION OF THE PACIFIC INTO A JAPANESE LAKE".

The Memorandum proves that this policy is a reality.

I have the honour to be,

Mr. President,

Your most obedient,
humble servant

For The Korean Delegation
(Signed) JOHN XIUSIC SOHC KIM

LA MISSION CORÉENNE

PARIS, 36, Rue de Châteaudun

May 14th, 1919

Sir,

We beg to enclose for your perusal a copy of the Claim which we have filed with the Peace Conference on behalf of the Korean People and Nation, together with a copy of a letter addressed to President Wilson.

Until now the unimaginable wrongs and the unspeakable oppression that Korea and the Koreans have been, and are, subject to have never been known to the world. A veritable "Chinese wall" has been built around Korea; and while the Koreans are constantly being kept in ignorance of what is taking place outside, the world on the other hand is made to believe that a real paradise reigns within.

Therefore in presenting you with these documents we simply wish to expose certain facts and truths and only solicit your impartial judgment for the sake of HUMANITY AND JUSTICE that are being trampled under the iron heel of the Asiatic Kaiser who really surpasses his Prussian pattern.

We have the honour to be,

Sir,

Yours most respectfully

THE KOREAN DELEGATION

Minister of Education

THE PEACE CONFERENCE

THE CLAIM OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE AND NATION
FOR LIBERATION FROM JAPAN AND FOR THE RECONSTITUTION
OF KOREA AS AN INDEPENDENT STATE TO BE EFFECTED BY
AND THROUGH THE PEACE CONFERENCE DECLARING AS NULL
AND VOID OR OTHERWISE ABROGATING THE TREATY
CONCLUDED AT SEOUL ON AUGUST 22, 1910, WHEREBY JAPAN
PURPORTED TO ANNEX THE EMPIRE OF KOREA

Petition

PARIS: APRIL, 1919.

KOREAN DELEGATION

TO THE PEACE CONFERENCE IN SESSION AT PARIS:

THE PETITION of the KOREAN
PEOPLE AND NATION for libe-
ration from Japan and for the recon-
stitution of Korea as an independent
state

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH:

The Korean People have been a nation for more than 4,200 years, with a settled life and culture and with their country forming one of the historic states of Asia. During most of these **Forty-two Centuries**, Korea enjoyed national independence.

KOREAN INDEPENDENCE RECOGNISED.

2.—The continued existence of Korea as a separate and sovereign state was recognised by Japan, the United States, Great Britain and other foreign Powers in their respective treaties of peace and commerce concluded with the Korean Government.

In the Treaty with the United States, signed at Seoul on May 22, 1882, it was expressly agreed that "if other Powers deal unjustly or oppressively with either Government the other will exert their good offices, on being informed of the case, to bring about an amicable arrangement, thus showing their friendly feelings."

In the Treaty of Shimonoseki, signed on April 17, 1895, Japan insisted on China's definite recognition of the "full and complete independence and autonomy of Korea". And in the first Anglo-Japanese agreement of alliance, concluded on January 30, 1902, Japan and Great Britain affirmed and substantially guaranteed the independence of Korea. Lastly, in the Treaty of Defensive and Offensive Alliance made between the Japanese Government and the Korean Government in 1904, Japan specifically guaranteed the independence and integrity of Korea.

KOREAN INDEPENDENCE AS AN INTERNATIONAL DOCTRINE.

3.—These treaties not only affirmed and confirmed the separate existence of Korea as a sovereign state but they established, it is submitted, Korean independence on the basis of an international authority and sanction which no single Power could violate without subjecting its action to eventual revision by other Powers.

JAPAN'S VIOLATION OF KOREAN INDEPENDENCE.

4.—Such a violation of Korean independence was committed by Japan when the Japanese Government—by acts of fraud and force—compelled the conclu-

sion of the Treaty of August 22, 1910, whereby the then Emperor of Korea purported to cede "completely and permanently to His Majesty the Emperor of Japan all rights of sovereignty over the whole of Korea", with her then population of more than Fifteen Million Koreans.

THE KOREAN PROTEST.

5.—Against this extinction of Korean sovereignty and the incorporation of their Country as a province of Japan, the Korean People and Nation have strenuously protested and do still protest.

6.—This protest is renewed and is strengthened daily owing to the methods applied by Japan in the administration of Korea. In ruthlessness and efficiency these methods exceed those practised by Prussia in her Eastern Provinces, in Schleswig-Holstein, in Alsace-Lorraine *.

Not only in name but in reality, Japan is determined to turn Korea into a Japanese province. And she is trying to do this by a pitiless attempt to extirpate the great roots of patriotism—love of the soil, language of the people and the history of the nation—and also to "control" the two means which might render futile this organised attempt to destroy Korean patriotism, i. e. education and wealth.

JAPANESE "CONTROL" OF KOREAN EDUCATION AND WEALTH.

7.—Any and every department of modern education calculated, if pursued beyond a certain point, to encourage what Count Terauchi—the Japanese proconsul who "annexed" Korea—calls "dangerous thoughts" is either forbidden or taught in an emasculated sense in the schools of Korea under Government control. And the Korean student is absolutely prohibited from going to Europe or the United States to seek a modern education even at his or her expense.

8.—Nearly every Wealthy Korean is obliged to have a Japanese overseer at his house, controlling his properties and finances. And Koreans with deposits in the Banks—which are all Japanese institutions—cannot withdraw large amounts at one time without disclosing to the Banks the purpose or purposes for which the money is to be used.

JAPAN AND CHRISTIANITY.

9.—Every effort is made by the Japanese Authorities—particularly through their police agents—to discourage and obstruct Christian missionary work in Korea which is envisaged as opposed to vital Japanese interests in the Peninsula.

Is not the gravest indictment of Japan's work in Korea to be read in the fact that Christianity is seriously regarded as a force hostile to the success of the Japanese system of Government in the Country?

KOREA FOR THE JAPANESE.

10.—The Japanese Authorities claim that "reforms" have been introduced into Korea. But it is well to remember that "most of these reforms, valuable as they are, may be found in a well-regulated penal colony" ("The Korean Conspiracy Case": New York) and all of them have been effected or introduced at the expense

* "A rigid spy system is inaugurated (in Korea). Everyone must be registered and is given a number, which is known to the police. Every time he leaves his village or town he must register at the police station and state fully the business he intends to transact and his destination. The policeman phones to this place and if his actions are in any way at variance with his report he is liable to arrest and mistreatment. A strict classification is kept on the basis of a man's education, influence, position, etc. As soon as a man begins to show ability or qualities of leadership he is put in class "A"; detectives are set on his trail, and from thenceforth he becomes a marked man, hounded wherever he goes. Even children are watched and bribed for information. If a man escapes the country his number is traced, his family or relatives arrested and perchance tortured until they reveal his whereabouts. A man is likely to disappear any day and perhaps not be heard of again. It is a very efficient Prussianism which thus aims to crush the spirit of a people."

"This policy is carried out in the educational system by forbidding the teaching of Korean history & geography... by excluding all European history & literature... by forbidding any Korean student to go abroad for an education; in fact, by forbidding them to leave the country... by forbidding them to entertain or express Korean ideas or aspirations. One student was put in jail for three months and fined three hundred dollars because he was caught singing the Korean national anthem." From a paper recently published in the United States by J. E. Moore, an American born in Korea.

of the Korean taxpayer in the interest and for the benefit of the Japanese Settler for whom the Japanese Authorities are bent on making Korea an attractive field of colonisation.

11.—The Japanese rules and administers Korea in the spirit and by the methods of a Master-Nation or, more accurately, a Profiteer-Nation.

Except in the sense that cattle or slaves must be taken care of if they are to be of any value to their owners, the welfare of the Korean People is not an aim of government with Japan.

JAPAN AGAINST THE WORLD.

12.—In addition to these reasons connected directly with the fate of the Korean People, the vital interests of the world—especially the Asiatic interests of France and the Asiatic and Pacific interests of Great Britain and the United States—demand the dis-annexation of Korea and the liberation of her People from Japan.

13.—In trade and commerce, Japan is gradually eliminating the Western trader and merchant in Korea and transferring to the exclusive hands of her own people trade interests which have had their origin in the series of treaties of peace and commerce concluded between Korea and the foreign Powers.

In this elimination of Western competition, Japan continues true to that instinct for exclusion which, in the past, found expression in her rigidly guarded isolation and which, to-day, expresses itself in the menacing attempt to Exclude Western Influence in Far Asia through the application of a debased Monroe Doctrine for the Far East.

JAPAN'S CONTINENTAL POLICY.

14.—It is, however, in the far-reaching political aims of Japan—realisable eventually through her continued annexation of Korea—that France as well as Great Britain and America must be vitally interested.

The danger to the non-Japanese world, including specially the three Latin and Anglo-Saxon Powers, lies in Japan's unfettered prosecution of her Continental Policy.

This policy aims, first, at the seizure of the hegemony of Asia through the Domination and Control of the Man-Power and Natural Resources of China—possible by the Japanese possession of the continental point d'appui of Korea—and, next, at the Mastery of the Pacific as the Sole Means of Securing Unrestricted Entrance for the Japanese Immigrant into Australasia and the United States.

THE POLICY IN OPERATION.

15.—Japan's Continental Policy has already found expression—

(a) in two successful wars which have made her the greatest military power in Asia in much the same way that Prussia's two wars made her the greatest military power in Europe;

(b) in the annexation of Korea;

(c) in the gradual substitution of Japanese for Chinese authority in South Manchuria and Eastern Inner Mongolia;

(d) in the attempt now being made to secure from the Peace Conference the succession of Japan to German holdings and privileges in the Chinese province of Shantung, including Kiaochow;

(e) in the growing subjection of China, with her incalculable man-power and resources, to Japanese domination by and through the same set of methods which made the annexation of Korea a "political necessity"; and

(f) in the Japanese possession of the "South Sea Islands north of the Equator" which brings Japan nearly two thousand miles closer to Australia and gives the Japanese Navy a base which dominates, practically, the entire land-areas of the Pacific.

THE KOREAN REVOLUTION.

16.—The protest and opposition of the Korean People to Japanese annexation of their country and to the process of political extermination applied to them by the Mikado's agents, has now expressed itself in the **Korean Revolution.**

On the First of March at 1 p.m., the **Korean People and Nation declared their independence.** This act of independence was formally done by the **National Independence Union**, composed of three million Koreans representing and expressing the desire and will of 18,700,000 Koreans in Korea proper, in Chita, in Siberia, in Hawaii and in the United States.

The declaration states: "It is our solemn duty to secure the right of free and perpetual development of our own national character, adapting ourselves to the principles of the reconstruction of the world—to secure our independence, to wipe out injuries, get rid of our present sufferings, and leave our children eternal freedom instead of a bitter and shameful inheritance."

PROGRESS OF THE REVOLUTION.

17.—The Korean Delegation—appointed by the New Korean Young Men's Society to which are affiliated the Korean National Independence Union and other bodies organised in the cause of Korean independence—is in receipt of several cables (despatches, reporting the progress of the revolution and the national movement for independence.

A despatch from the Korean National Independence Union received in Paris, via Shanghai, on April 7 instant, reads in part as follows: "On March 26 we held grand demonstrations at Seoul. Our national flags were flown on the city hills. The Japanese Authorities arrested two hundred of those who participated in the demonstrations. There were casualties on both sides. Samnam (i.e. all provinces south of Seoul) are uprising every day. Korean demonstrations are taking place in Eastern Siberia and Manchuria."

THE KOREAN REPUBLIC.

18.—The same despatch reports the organisation of a Provisional Republican Government of Korea, consisting of a President, Vice-President, Secretary of State, Minister for Home Affairs, Minister of Finance, Minister of Justice and Minister of War.

Among those included in the Provisional Government are Prince Pak Yung-hio and Messrs. Rhee Syngman, Ahn Chang Ho and Li Tong Whi. Prince Pak Yung-hio is one of the five great leaders who inaugurated what is known in Korean history as the movement of the Progressive Party in 1894. He was the chief figure among the Progressives who, in 1894, compelled the introduction of modern reforms into Korea. He was at one time Minister for Home Affairs before the annexation. Rhee Syngman is an M.A. of Harvard, U.S.A. and Ph.D. of Prince on, U.S.A. Since 1894 he has been one of the leaders of the old Korean Independence Club. As a political worker, he has suffered imprisonment and he has also been tortured. Ahn Chang Ho is the founder of the **Sin Min Huh** or People's Society and, since 1905, has been a leader of young Korean nationalists. He is the President of the Korean National Association. Li Tong Whi is a former major in the old Korean Army and a recognised leader of Korean nationalists in Siberia and Manchuria. He has been imprisoned and tortured by the Japanese Authorities.

JAPANESE REPRESSION.

19.—Another despatch received by the Korean Delegation on April 10 instant states that "from first March up to date, active demonstrations of the Independence movement have been very well conducted all over Korea. Representatives prefer passive revolution, including lecturing and distribution of manifestoes. Girls more active. Strikes have occurred in enemy (Japanese)

factories, stores, etc. Our churches, schools and stores closed everywhere. 32,000 men and women are in prison. About 100,000 have been injured, including old people, girls and children. Interior traffic communications severed. **Terrible outrages committed by enemy (Japanese).** Missionaries are sending truth to world."

In a further despatch which reached the Korean Delegation on April 11 instant, Japanese atrocities are reported: "Japan has begun massacring in Korea. On March 28, over 1,000 unarmed people were killed during a three-hour demonstration held in Seoul. The shooting, beating and hooking (bayonetting) of people are in merciless progress throughout Korea. Churches, schools and homes of leaders have been destroyed. Women are being stripped naked and beaten before crowds, especially female members of leaders' families. The imprisoned are being tortured. Doctors are forbidden to attend to the wounded. We ask urgently aid from Foreign Red Cross. We have decided to fight for freedom until last Korean falls. We solicit help in the name of God."

Of the many news despatches on the subject appearing in the American and the European Press, it must suffice here to quote the latest from the Tokio correspondent of the London "Times". It appeared in the issue of the London paper on April 17 instant, under the caption "Korea's Rights". "While it is recognized that there can be only one outcome of the disturbances in Korea, the Government's decision to reinforce the military establishment in the peninsula evokes universal Press comment, the feature of which is the recognition that it will be inevitable, when opportunity occurs, to replace the Military Governor by a civilian Governor. The 'Nichi-Nichi' attributes the disturbances chiefly to a mistaken conception of the principle of self-determination, also to the inimical influence of missionaries. The 'Jiji' says it is evident that many reforms are necessary in Korea. Another journal dwells on the fact that the Koreans are not an inferior people..."

ABROGATION OF THE TREATY OF ANNEXATION.

20.—The Korean People submit that the **Treaty of Annexation** of August 22, 1910, should be declared **Null and Void** or otherwise abrogated by the Peace Conference for the reasons set forth in this Petition and further elaborated in the Memorandum hereto attached and more especially for the reasons following:—

I.—The said Treaty of Annexation was concluded in circumstances of **Fraud and Force** which vitiated its validity as a legal and international document, even assuming that the then Emperor of Korea had the right to hand over to "His Majesty the Emperor of Japan" **Fifteen Million Koreans** and a country that had existed as a separate and sovereign state for more than 4,300 years.

II.—The Korean People and Nation have consistently denied the right of the then "puppet" Emperor of Korea to deal with them in terms of the said Treaty of Annexation. Being men and not cattle they hold that their consent is and has been an essential condition to the validity of the said Treaty. This consent has never been given.

III.—The said Treaty of Annexation was and is a direct violation by Japan of the International guarantees entered into by the Japanese Government with Korea and other Powers regarding Korean independence and integrity.

IV.—In the several Treaties concluded between Korea and Japan and other Powers, and by Japan with China, with Russia and with Great Britain, regarding Korea, the existence of the latter as a separate and sovereign state is—as to all these treaties—explicitly recognised and its political independence and territorial integrity

* The Japan-Korean Treaty of February 26 or 27, 1876, states in the first article "Chosen being an independent state enjoys the same sovereign rights as does Japan".

In the Japan-Russian Protocol of April 25, 1878, it is stipulated in Article I that the "Imperial Governments of Japan and Russia definitively recognize the sovereignty and entire independence of Korea, and mutually engage to refrain from all direct interference in the internal affairs of that country."

The Japan-Korean Protocol of February 22, 1901, provides (art. 3) that the "Imperial Government of Japan definitively guarantees the independence and territorial integrity of the Korean Empire."

X is—as to some of them—also explicitly guaranteed in terms establishing the same on the basis of a public law of nations which no single Power—especially Japan—could violate without subjecting its action to eventual revision by the Powers assembled in an international congress like the present Peace Conference.

X V.—The Peace Conference meets in order to secure a settlement of the affairs of the member-nations according to the principles expressed in President Wilson's **Fourteen Points**. The principles underlying this statement of views is defined by the President in his Message to Congress on January 8, 1918, as “the principle of justice to all peoples and nationalities and their right to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another, whether they be strong or weak.”

As one of the Allied and Associated States in the war, Japan has expressly accepted the Fourteen Points with their underlying principle of justice. Inasmuch as this principle of justice is clearly violated by the Mikado's continued exercise of “all rights of sovereignty over the whole of Korea” without the consent and against the wishes of the Korean People and Nation, it becomes the right and the duty of the Peace Conference to declare the nullification or otherwise decree the abrogation of the aforesaid Treaty of Annexation.

VI.—In virtue of rights founded in International Law and of the **New Justice** which is to redress the wrongs of nations, the Korean People have a just claim for the **Reconstitution of Korea as an Independent State** unless, indeed, they are to be excluded from the scope of the principles which have already found expression in the reconstitution of Poland after almost one and a half centuries of partitions and annexations and in the dis-annexation of Alsace-Lorraine after nearly half a century of Prussian rule.

It is less than ten years since Japan effected the annexation of Korea. And the fact that the outbreak of the war did not find Japan an ally of the Central Powers—a political combination that had always been envisaged by the German-trained advisers of the Mikado—is no reason why the Korean People should be suffered by the Peace Conference to continue to live under a system of military government which is a denial of every principle for which men have lately died on the soil of France.

X THIS PETITION is presented in the name and on behalf of the **Provisional Republican Government of Korea** and of the **Eighteen Million Seven Hundred Thousand Koreans** living in Korea proper, in China, Siberia, Hawaii, the United States and elsewhere as well as of the **Five Thousand and More Koreans** who fought for the Allied cause on the Eastern Front before the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk—in the aggregate forming and constituting the **Korean People and Nation**—by the undersigned John Kiusic Soho Kimm, the duly accredited Member of the Korean Delegation appointed by the New Korean Young Men's Society, etc., etc.

(Signe) J. Kiusic S. Kimm

*Delegate of New Korean Young Men's Society,
Delegate of the Korean National Association,
Delegate of the Provisional Government of the
Korean Republic, Etc., Etc., Etc.*

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